DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 362 991 EA 025 362

TITLE	Building Capacity for Systemic Reform.
INSTITUTION	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC. Programs for the Improvement of Practice.
REPORT NO	PIP-93-1505
PUB DATE	93
NOTE	11p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - General (140)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Educational Assessment; Educational Change; *Educational Objectives; Elementary Secondary Education; Federal Aid; Federal Government; *Federal Programs; *School Restructuring
IDENTIFIERS	*Federal Role

ABSTRACT

This document, prepared by the U.S. Department of Education-National Science Foundation (ED-NSF) Task Group on Systemic Reform, proposes a framework for creating a comprehensive, coordinated approach to the reform of elementary-secondary education. The group focuses on two themes of educational reform--increasing the capacity for reform at the state and local levels and coordinating federal leadership efforts. The Task Force considered the following areas of concern with regard to strengthening the impact of federal systemic-reform efforts: (1) implementation of the Goals 2000: Educate America Act; (2) reauthorization of ED elementary and secondary programs and other proposed legislation; (3) technical assistance activities; and (4) evaluation of systemic-reform activities. The task force recommends the continuation of a coordinating body on systemic reform composed of employees from ED and NSF who directly manage systemic reform programs. (LMI)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

BUILDING A CAPACITY FOR SYSTEMIC REFORM

ED 362 991

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

EA 025 362

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ED-NSF Memorandum of Understanding

Task Group on Systemic Reform

U.S. Department of Education

Thomas M. Corwin, Chair
Office of Management and Budget/Chief Financial Officer

John Egermeier
Office of Educational Research and Improvement

Daniel Bonner
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education

National Science Foundation

Margaret Cozzens
Division of Elementary, Secondary, and Informal Education

Janice Earle
Office of Systemic Reform

Terry Woodin
Division of Undergraduate Education

Madeleine Long
Office of Systemic Reform

****

Assisted by:
Julie Edmunds, U.S. Department of Education
Office of Management and Budget/Chief Financial Officer

BUILDING A CAPACITY FOR SYSTEMIC REFORM

Report of the ED-NSF Memorandum of Understanding Task Group on Systemic Reform

August 20, 1993

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) and the National Science Foundation (NSF) share a compelling interest in the systemic reform of elementary and secondary education. Both agencies have launched activities in pursuit of this goal. Yet, these efforts are unlikely to reach their potential if the two agencies do not work in tandem, if their actions proceed at cross-purposes, and if they do not address consistent themes and objectives. Clearly, a coordinated, comprehensive approach, addressing such components of the reform effort as Federal leadership, State and local implementation, technical assistance, and evaluation, is needed. The purpose of this report is to recommend the basic framework for such an approach.

The ED-NSF Task Group on Systemic Reform believes that, for educational reform to succeed, *States, districts, and schools, in partnership with the communities they serve, must develop the capacity to undertake and sustain reform.* The Task Group further believes that *the Federal Government must have a clear vision of its leadership role* in this effort; this vision must guide implementation of all Federal programs that States and localities will draw upon in implementing reforms, including the NSF Statewide and Urban Systemic Initiatives, the ED Goals 2000 program, the reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act programs, and, potentially, the School-to-Work initiative and the President's Enterprise Zones initiative. These efforts must be part of a Federal strategy for effecting comprehensive education reform; they must be coordinated at all levels, especially within and across Federal agencies. The Federal Government must first practice the systemic reform that it preaches.

These two overarching themes—increasing the capacity for reform and coordinating Federal efforts—provide a context within which the group considered the following specific areas of concern.

1. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GOALS 2000: EDUCATE AMERICA ACT

On April 21, 1993, the U.S. Department of Education sent to Congress the "Goals 2000: Educate America Act," which would provide resources to States and local school districts for undertaking systemic reform to attain the National Education Goals. NSF has several years' experience in working with the States in this area, mostly through the Statewide Systemic Initiative (SSI), but also through large Teacher Enhancement grants and the new Collaboratives for Excellence in Teacher Preparation. The NSF experience can inform ED's implementation of the new bill, so that successes are built upon and mistakes are not repeated.

The Systemic Reform Task Group, therefore, makes these specific recommendations:

- ED officials who will manage the Goals 2000 program should meet with NSF staff who have experience administering systemic reform programs to draw on their experiences. A working group of program managers from the two agencies might be the logical successor to this Task Group. Staff involved in implementation of the School-to-Work and Enterprise Zones initiatives might participate as well.

- The NSF experience with the Statewide Systemic Initiative (SSI) program suggests that the *outside experts who peer-review the Goals 2000 State plans will need to be carefully selected and may need some training*. Further, larger-than-normal peer review panels may be needed to cover all aspects of States' reform strategies; for the SSI program, nine-member panels were required. In assembling these panels, ED may wish to use some of the same reviewers who participated in the evaluation of SSI applications, as well as principal investigators in SSI States and Federal staff who have been involved in the SSI program, because of the benefits that could be drawn from their experience.

- Systemic reform in mathematics, science, and technology education at any level—national, State, or local—requires the alignment of standards, curriculum, assessments of student learning, teacher enhancement, and teacher preparation. Resources in

these areas should be focused to ensure this alignment. In addition, *the two agencies should produce clear signals that State activities financed through our respective programs should contribute to a single, integrated reform effort,* not to one effort, funded by NSF, that focuses on mathematics and science education and a second one, funded by ED, that looks at the broader curriculum.

- True systemic reform requires a well-defined planning period for members of the collaborative group to come together and identify goals and objectives, mechanisms that could be put in place to achieve the goals, and strategies for sustaining and institutionalizing all of the reform activities. This planning period may need to be as long as a year to ensure that all of the players are in place with a common agenda. Therefore, for many States, *planning activities should be the major focus of the first year of Goals 2000 activities.*

- From the very beginning, ED should provide *adequate technical assistance to States* in the planning and implementation of their Goals 2000 systemic reform efforts. A good technical assistance program can not only advise, but can also point out areas that need to be addressed. (See additional discussion under section 3.)

- NSF and ED should consider the roles and responsibilities of various *policy and advisory boards* mandated under their respective systemic reform programs in light of the Administration's commitment to reducing unnecessary advisory bodies and to preventing overlap and redundancy. In many cases, ED and NSF should encourage the use of the same boards or individuals for both Goals 2000 and, as applicable, the SSI or the Urban Systemic Initiative (USI).

2. REAUTHORIZATION OF ED ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY PROGRAMS AND OTHER PROPOSED LEGISLATION

ED is currently developing proposals for the pending reauthorization of its elementary and secondary education programs. As noted above, these proposals should be additional components in Federal support for

the State and local reforms initiated through the Goals 2000, SSI, and USI programs. Other legislative development, both within the Administration and in Congress, is also underway.

The MOU Systemic Reform Task Group makes the following suggestions for the development of ED and NSF's legislative initiatives:

- ED and NSF must not fragment Federal reform efforts through the creation of a multitude of "systemic reform" activities. All resources going to a State should be focused on support for a single, comprehensive strategy to attain the National Education Goals.

- NSF and ED should work together to develop agency responses to Congressional proposals in the area of *educational technology*, so as to ensure that the resulting legislation is integrated, rather than duplicative, and assigns responsibilities according to each agency's particular strengths. Because the Administration's response to these initiatives will involve more agencies than just ED and NSF, they should also work cooperatively with the FCCSET/CET Working Group on Educational Technologies in formulating its recommendations.

- The pending elementary and secondary education reauthorization opens up a number of opportunities for greater integration of NSF and ED programs. For example:

  —The Eisenhower Mathematics and Science Education program and Chapter 2 could be consolidated to support an educator professional development program for education that funds high-quality, intensive professional development within the context of systemic reform. The consolidation should give special emphasis to science and mathematics, supporting professional development activities linked with SSI and USI programs.

  —The Eisenhower and other educational professional development programs included in the reauthorization can be better coordinated and aligned with a common strategy with the NSF Teacher Enhancement and Teacher Preparation programs.

—The Chapter 1 Local Educational Agency Grants program can become a better vehicle for systemic reform, with teaching and assessments tied to more challenging academic standards, such as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics standards for mathematics and the National Academy of Science standards for science, and with more attention given to the professional development needs of teachers. In addition, Chapter 1 could focus more effectively on supporting the introduction of new technologies in the classroom.

—Other programs up for reauthorization, such as Migrant Education, Bilingual Education, and Indian Education, which focus on the educational needs of different populations, can also be revised to place greater emphasis on high standards, improved assessments, greater use of new technologies, and other reform-oriented strategies.

Members of the Task Group will continue to consult during the reauthorization process to share information and develop ideas of mutual benefit.

3. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES

The provision of solid technical assistance is critical to the ability of States, districts, and schools to undertake systemic reform. ED currently funds dozens of technical assistance centers, laboratories, and consortia in a number of areas, including mathematics and science. In response to critiques that these centers are uncoordinated and duplicative, the Department has been debating the most effective way to provide technical assistance. NSF has also recognized the need for effective technical assistance through its experience with the SSI program and earlier implementation of curricular reform projects. Efforts in both agencies should inform and complement each other.

The Systemic Reform Task Group, therefore, makes the following recommendations:

- Technical assistance should be provided as close to the start of new, complex initiatives as possible, and should include assistance in the planning process.

- Technical assistance should focus on ***building the on-going capacity for reform***, and it should be

provided by individuals with *proven content expertise and experience.*

- NSF should share its revised *Technical Assistance Plan* for the Statewide Systemic Initiative program with ED, and ED should share its ideas as it develops an *overall technical assistance strategy* with NSF.

- NSF and ED should work together to increase the effectiveness of the *Eisenhower Regional Consortia.* NSF and ED should provide a forum for interaction between the technical assistance contractor for the SSI program and the Consortia, while NSF should encourage SSI participants to work with the Consortia.

- NSF and ED should coordinate the Eisenhower Clearinghouse with NSF's Clearinghouse, currently operating through the Educational Development Center, for SSI States.

4. EVALUATION OF SYSTEMIC REFORM ACTIVITIES

An important question that needs to be raised in designing and promoting systemic reform is, "How does one evaluate the systemic efforts in a systemic way?" Policymakers and others need good information on when to look for particular results and what the expected outcomes should be. Analysis of the use and character of baseline data is essential. What ways are there to ensure that the evaluative criteria are appropriate? What are the variables and what are the constants across States and locales?

The Systemic Reform Task Group provides a few suggestions for securing answers to these questions.

- Currently a Working Group based in NSF's Division of Research, Evaluation, and Dissemination is identifying *long-term systemic indicators* to assist in the on-going evaluation of the SSI program. Department of Education employees who will be involved in evaluation of Goals 2000 should join this working group.

- In their design of, and participation in, *international and national assessments*, ED and NSF should reflect the long-term indicators developed for assessment of systemic reform programs.

- While improved student achievement remains the ultimate goal for systemic reform activities, it may take several years for reforms to manifest themselves in measurable student performance outcomes. Therefore, there is a need to develop a set of intermediate benchmarks to determine if States, school districts, and cities are making reasonable progress in their reform efforts. Examples of such benchmarks could include new or stronger partnerships, increased awareness of mathematics and science education reform, or increased leveraging of funds to support systemic reform. Identification and use of appropriate intermediate indicators will enable agencies to make adjustments at mid-point in the reform process, rather than waiting for as much as a decade to determine whether real change is occurring and education improving. A committee of perhaps three people from the Department of Education and three people from NSF, with other input as needed, should be created to develop these benchmarks. These benchmarks should be completed by November 1, 1993.

CONCLUSION

These recommendations represent the Systemic Reform Task Group's view of the actions necessary to increase the impact of Federal systemic reform efforts. The Task Group recommends the continuation of a coordinating body on systemic reform made up primarily of employees from ED and NSF who are charged with the direct management of systemic reform programs.

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1993 O - 358-198 : QL 3

PIP 93–1505